



**Relatable Data I-5 (Seattle to SeaTac) and I-5/I-90 (Issaquah to Seattle) for January–March 2004**  
Data Source: WITS–Traffic Office

***Incident Response Activities During the First Quarter of 2004 (January–March) during weekdays (60 days of activities)***

**Between Seattle and SeaTac (SB I-5, 13 miles):**

- *Average Number of Responses Per Day:* There were a total of 904 incidents responded—an average of 15 responses per day.
- *Incident Types:* 77% of incidents were disabled/abandoned vehicles, 12.5% were for collisions, and 6.5% were for debris.
- *Locations:* 65% of incidents were on the shoulder/median, 18.4% were blocking single lanes, and 8.6% were on ramps.
- *Quick Clearance of Incidents:* 91% of disabled/abandoned vehicles were cleared within 30 minutes of happening (start of incident = when disabled).

**Between Issaquah and Seattle (WB I-90 and NB I-5, 15.5 miles):**

- *Average Number of Responses Per Day:* There were a total of 488 incidents responded—an average of 8 responses per day.
- *Incident Types:* 71.7% of incidents were disabled/abandoned vehicles, 17.8% were for collisions, and 6.6% was for debris.
- *Locations:* 61.9% of incidents were on the shoulder/median, 26.2% were blocking single lanes, and 11.7.4% were on ramps.
- *Quick Clearance of Incidents:* 90.3% of disabled/abandoned vehicles were cleared within 30 minutes of happening (start of incident = when disabled).

**Incident Response Effect on Travel Time**

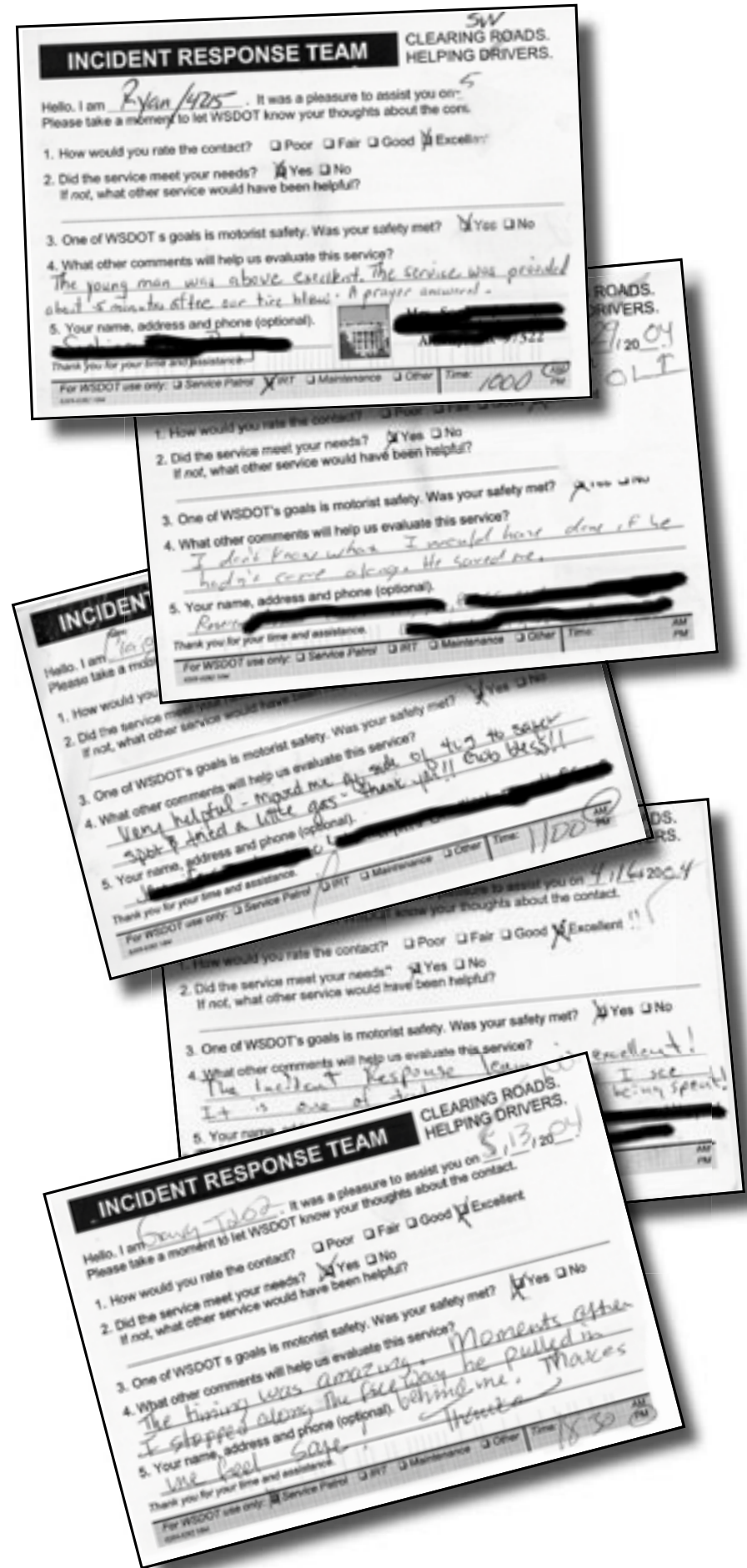
Smarter, more attentive highway management—like the Incident Response Program and the Joint Operations Policy Statement (national-model operating agreement between WSDOT and the Washington State Patrol)—are beneficial to travelers in reduced delay.

**2002 & 2003 Peak Travel Times – Highlighted Improvements**

			Average Peak Travel Time			Number of Days When Peak Travel Times Exceeded 2 X Free Flow			*95% Reliable Travel Time		
Route	Route Description	Miles	2002	2003	Change	2002	2003	Change	2002	2003	Change
I-90/I-405	Issaquah to Bellevue (AM)	9.5	16 min.	16 min.	0%	50 days	41 days	-18%	24 min.	22 min.	-8%
I-5	Seattle to SeaTac (PM)	13	19 min.	18 min.	-5%	30 days	4 days	-87%	28 min.	22 min.	-21%
I-90/I-5	Issaquah to Seattle (PM)	15.5	23 min.	22 min.	-4%	36 days	28 days	-22%	36 min.	33 min.	-8%
SR 167	Renton to Auburn (PM)	9.8	19 min.	16 min.	-16%	92 days	53 days	-42%	37 min.	27 min.	-27%

*\*95% Reliable Travel Times: You can expect to be on time for work 19 out of 20 working days a month (or 95% of your trips), if you allow for the 95% Reliable Travel Time.*

What we measure	Whom we report to
Number of incidents responded per time period (per region, quarter, annual) and per clearance time groups.	Assistant Secretary, Gray Notebook, Washington State Patrol, Incident Response Managers, Regional Administrators, Region Traffic Engineers, HQ Traffic.
Percentage of roving vs. dispatch vs. callout IRT units.	Incident Response Managers, Regional Administrators, Region Traffic Engineers, HQ Traffic.
Average clearance time (0-15 minutes, 15-90 minutes, 90+ minutes) per quarter and annual.	Assistant Secretary, Gray Notebook, Office of Financial Management, Incident Response Managers, Regional Administrators, Regional Traffic Engineers, HQ Traffic.
Number of motorist assists (non-collision) provided (as approximately comparable to Washington State Patrol's motorist assist numbers).	Washington State Patrol, Regional Traffic Engineers, HQ Traffic.
Comment Cards from constituents.	Incident Response Managers, Regional Administrators, Regional Traffic Engineers.
Incident types and response reasons per time period (per region, quarter, annual) and per clearance time groups.	Gray Notebook, Regional Traffic Engineers, HQ Traffic.



## The Measurement of Incident Response

### Clearing Roads Helping Drivers

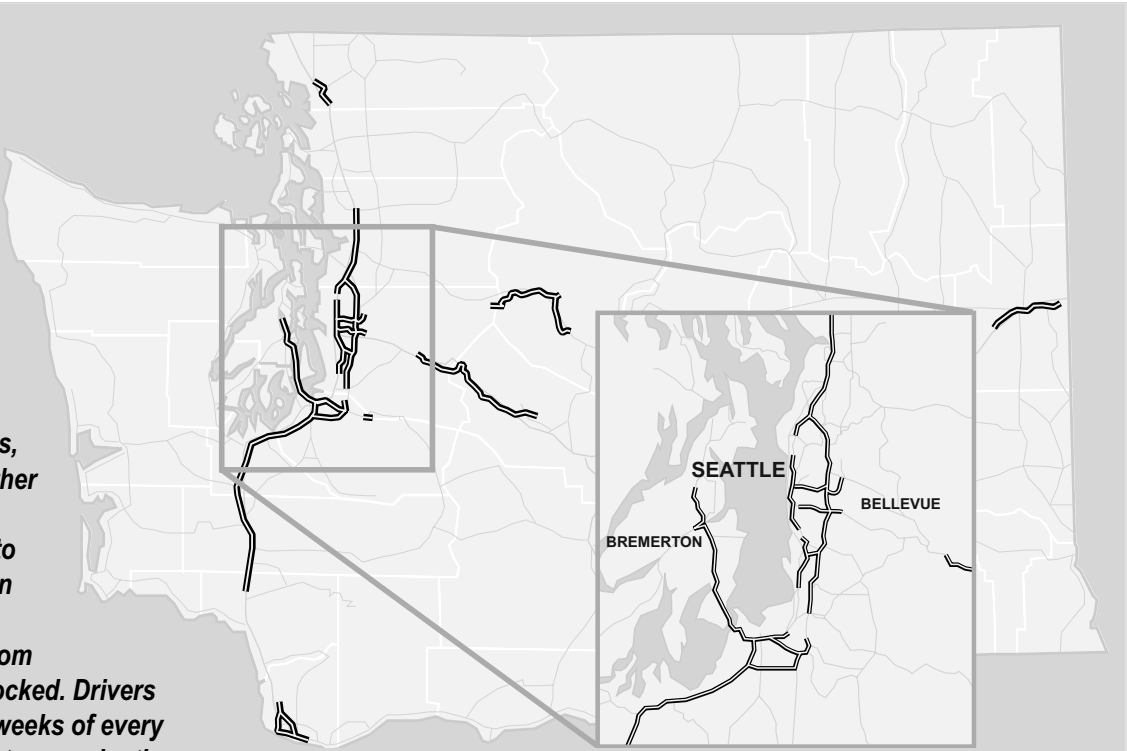
*“I’m glad to see my tax dollars going to such a helpful cause.”*  
**Thankful motorist**

June 2004



# Incident Response In Washington

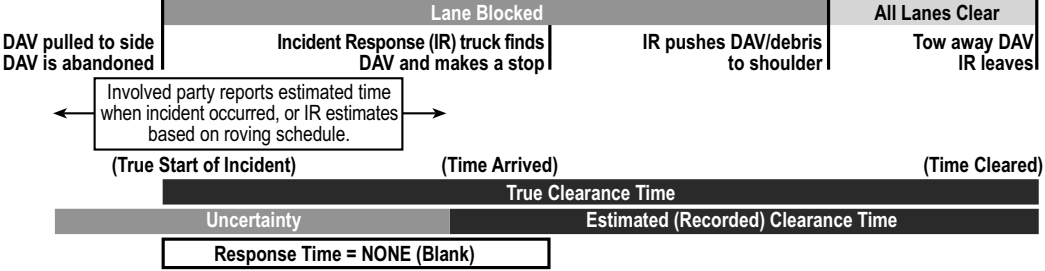
Highways in the State of Washington are operating at or above capacity and a blocked highway lane can result in miles of backups and long delays. A large portion of all congestion on urban freeways is caused by collisions, disabled vehicles, spills, and other events that impede the normal flow of traffic. As a result, four to ten minutes of traffic congestion (depending on the volume of traffic on the road) can result from every minute a lane remains blocked. Drivers in Washington may spend two weeks of every year stuck in traffic so it's easy to see why the Incident Response Team (IRT) serves a crucial role in keeping Washington on the move. IRT are a specially trained group of WSDOT maintenance employees who respond to blocking incidents on our state's freeways and highways. Their main functions are "clearing roads" and "helping drivers" to restore the normal flow of traffic as safely and quickly as possible.



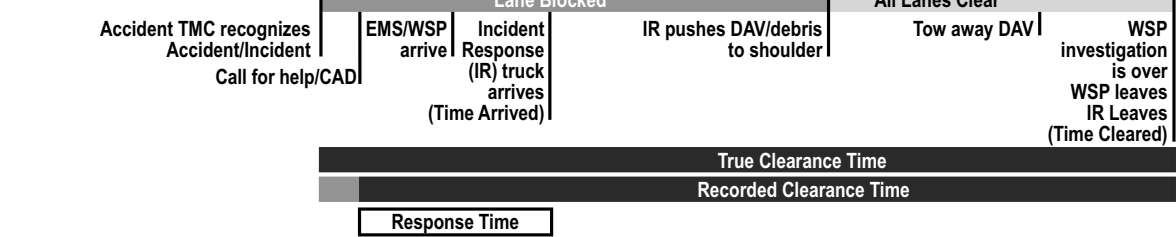
## Lane-Blocking Incidents

Differences in Performance Measures Between Roving and Call-Out Responses

### ROVING RESPONSE



### CALL OUT RESPONSE



"The partnership between the WSP and WSDOT has significantly increased highway safety in Washington. Through effective teamwork at major incidents, roadways are cleared faster, allowing for the smooth and safe flow of traffic on our roadways. In addition, the WSDOT is supporting us by providing over 100 motorist assists statewide daily, providing assistance efforts and increasing safety for the motoring public."

Lowell M. Porter  
Chief, Washington State Patrol

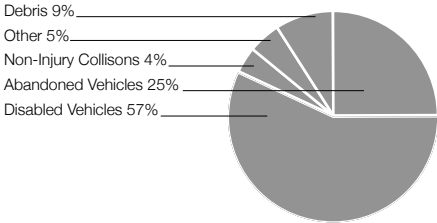
## Measured Results ... the measures for incident response are response time and clearance time.

A critical strategy to address congestion is to quickly clear incidents that cause congestion by the use of IRT. Incidents that last more than 15 minutes typically have multiple responders and/or jurisdictions (e.g., WSP, Fire, Ecology, tow trucks, etc.) working collaboratively to clear the scene. WSDOT is taking a closer look at these types of incidents in order to find ways to further reduce the time it takes to clear these incidents.

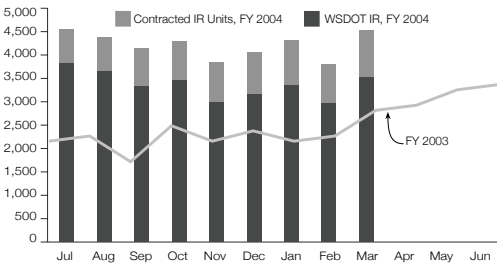
### Program Totals

The WSDOT IR program (including contracted IR units) executed a total of 12,562 incident responses during the first quarter of 2004. The total of incident responses was 67 percent higher than for the same period in the previous year. Along with the WSDOT roving units, non-WSDOT units provide contracted roving services. WSDOT IRT units responded to 78 per-cent of incidents and non-WSDOT roving units responded to 22 percent of incidents this quarter.

#### Incidents Lasting Less Than 15 Minutes (8,004)



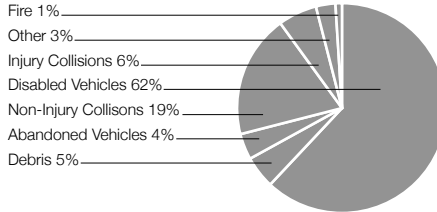
#### Total Number of Responses by Month



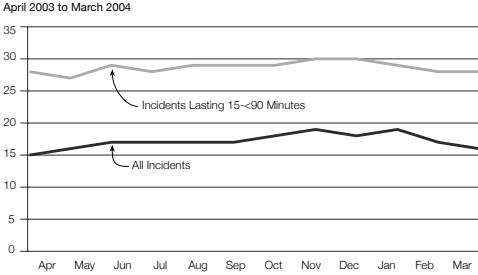
### Incidents and Clearance Times

Washington State's goal is to clear all incidents within 90 minutes. Minor incidents cleared under 15 minutes usually involve disabled vehicles, abandoned vehicles or debris removal (together, 91 percent of these short-term incidents), and rarely involve collisions.

#### Incidents Lasting 15 to 90 Minutes (4,363)



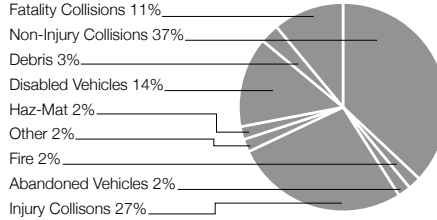
#### Average Clearance Time (in Minutes)



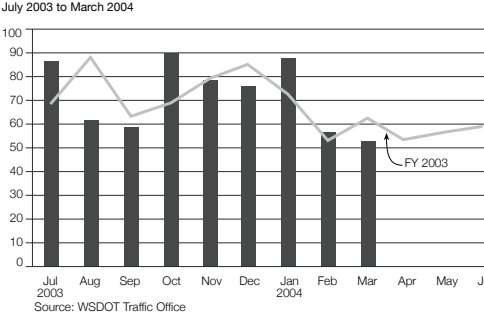
The more serious incidents that are cleared in the 15 to 90 minute window involve collisions only about a quarter of the time.

Only a small fraction of total incidents, 195 incidents or about two percent of all incidents in the last quarter, take over 90 minutes to clear. Three quarters of these involve collisions and include most of the fatality incidents. In the quarter under review, 64 percent of all incidents were cleared under 15 minutes. Eighty-seven percent were cleared under 30 minutes. Ninety-nine percent were cleared under 90 minutes.

#### Incidents Lasting 90+ Minutes (195)



#### Number of Over 90 Minutes Incidents by Month



### Over 90 Minutes Incidents

For the quarter, there were 195 major incidents that lasted 90+ minutes. Four of the five longest incidents in Quarter 1, 2004, occurred outside the IRT roving zones, and required a call-out unit to respond. The majority of major incidents (90+ minutes-clearance time) occur on or near the roving zones, where roving units are able to respond more swiftly.

#### Location of Over 90 Minute Incidents

